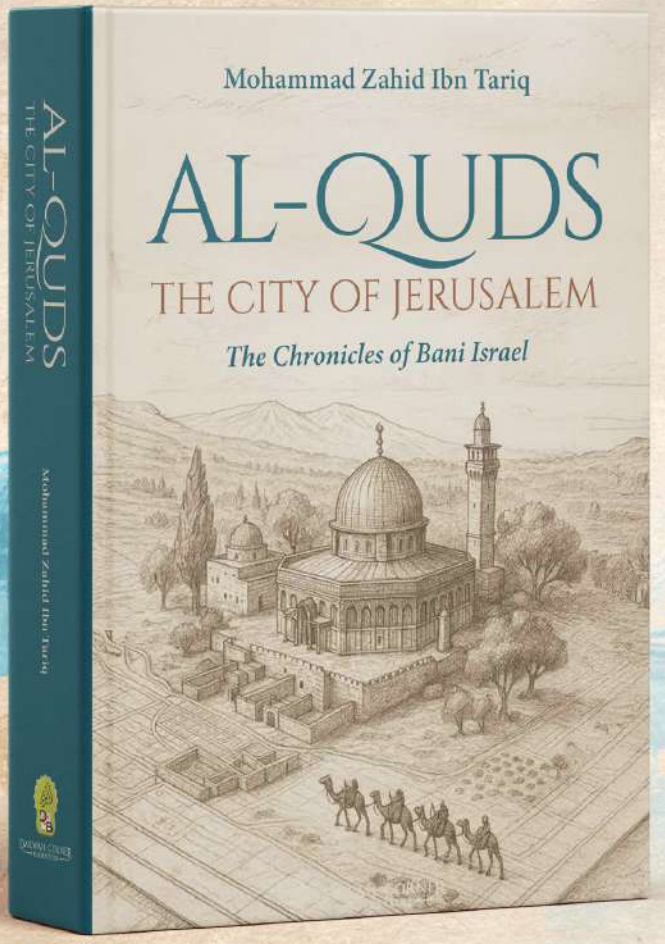
DAKWAH CORNER BOOKSTORE

INK OF FAITH

BOOK REVIEW



DAKWAH CORNER BOOKSTORE

INK OF FAITH

AL-QUDS

THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

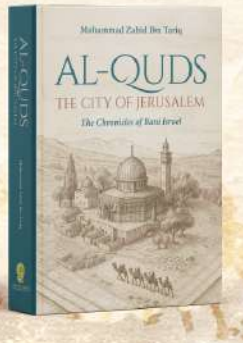
Book Review

"History of Al-Quds by Mohammad Zahid Mateen is a detailed and insightful work that not only traces the history of al-Quds but also brings out the lessons and benefits from each story and episode. His approach goes beyond presenting history; he skilfully highlights the practical teachings found in each event.

Through a careful and thorough presentation, the author connects the past to the present, showing readers how the trials, triumphs, and struggles of the Prophets (peace be upon them) and the Ummah hold direct relevance to our lives today. Every chapter offers an opportunity for reflection — a reminder of Allah's wisdom, mercy, and justice, and a call to strengthen our own character and faith.

The book is clear, well-organised, and firmly rooted in authentic sources. It carries the heart of a true teacher — someone who seeks not just to inform, but to uplift, guide, and awaken a deeper sense of responsibility towards al-Quds and towards Islām itself. As a friend and colleague, the author has made us all proud with this sincere and meaningful contribution. It is a work of dedication and scholarship. May Allah accept it from him, reward him abundantly, and allow it to be a source of lasting benefit for all who read it."

Shaykh Tariq Appleby
Al-Nawawi Institute, Germany



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AL-QUDS

THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

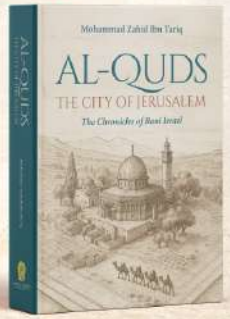
Book Review

"Al-Quds is a city where the past is firmly intertwined with the present. Being the first Qiblah and the place of Mi'rāj of the Prophet ﷺ, it is the seat of spiritual and worldly elevation, which has seen diverse nations and civilizations competing to control its reigns. The current political and military climate in the region should once again compel the Muslim mind to acquaint itself with the importance of al-Quds by intellectually engaging with understanding its history and extracting lessons for the future strategy of the Ummah.

The author of this work, Mohammad Zahid Mateen, has fulfilled this Kifāyah obligation for the English-speaking readers by articulating such a clear and well-organized book. I have known him as a younger brother and a genuine student of 'ilm for more than a decade now, and I am a witness to his vigor and hard work in understanding and practice. I ask Allah to grant him more Tawfīq in serving the Ummah and accept all our efforts for His sake. Āmīn!"

Shaykh Dr. Shuayb Wani

Director, Dār al-Ilm Institute, Istanbul



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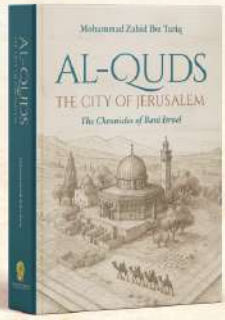
AL-QUDS
THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

Book Review

"Ibn Abbās ﷺ said regarding al-Quds: 'There is not a single hand span except that a Prophet of Allah or an angel has stood there and prostrated or prayed before Allah.' You cannot step in a place in Jerusalem except that a Prophet of Allah was once there. This book on the History of al-Quds invites us into a time-traveling journey of the land, reminding us that every Prophet who set foot there left behind a foot-print of mercy, justice, and patient perseverance. Its gentle scholarship insists that remembering Jerusalem correctly is itself an act of Ibādah—one that refines our world-view and keeps our compass fixed on stopping oppressors and liberating the oppressed. This book anchors advocacy for Palestine in both rigorous history and unwavering faith. It arms you with the facts to confront misinformation and ignites the spiritual resolve needed to stand firm for justice."

Shaykh Dr. Omar Suleiman
President, Yaqeen Institute, USA



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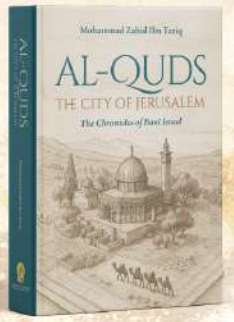
AL-QUDS
THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

Book Review

"Al-Quds holds a profoundly significant position in both Islamic and Israelite sacred history. To truly appreciate its significance, it is essential to understand the core principles that shape its story. Without this foundation, interpretations risk becoming confusing or misleading. This book, by our brother Mohammad Zahid, delivers precisely that: clear and essential insights derived from the Qur'ān, authentic Hadīth, and the views of early Muslim scholars. Written in a style reminiscent of classical historians such as al-Tabarī and Ibn Kathīr, the book presents a meticulously thoughtful and faithful approach to comprehending al-Quds. In undertaking this crucial endeavor, Mohammad Zahid has built a strong starting point for contemporary readers. His work renders a complex and often misunderstood history both accessible and profoundly meaningful. Beyond being a mere introduction, this book also functions as a powerful spiritual reminder, inviting readers to forge a deep connection with one of Islām's most revered and sacred sites."

Shaykh Wisnu Tanggap Prabowo
Researcher at the Center for Aqīdah Studies, IHKAM



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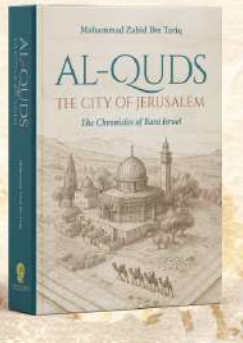
AL-QUDS
THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

Book Review

"The story of Bani Israel permeates throughout the Qur'ān. In many ways, you can't escape their story in the Qur'ān as almost every other page has some reference to the children of Ya'qūb ('alayhi as-salām). I have long felt that we need a book that compiles the entire story of Bani Israel so that we may learn from their mistakes. Despite their continuous disobedience, Allah the Almighty treated them with clemency. In the end, Allah the Almighty served them the greatest punishment in this world; He snatched away the blessing of Prophethood from them. We are the successors to Bani Israel, and their jealousy and hatred towards us, as promised in the Qur'ān, is still evident today as the genocide in Gaza continues.

I have perused through Shaykh Mohammad Zahid's book and have found it to be a beneficial and timely read. He has benefited from numerous sources and has ensured to keep the language reader-friendly. I highly recommend this book"

Mufti Muadh Chati
Founder, IslamicKnowledge.co.uk, UK



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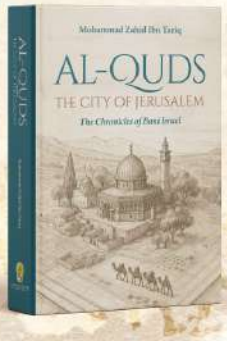
AL-QUDS
THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

Book Review

"As someone who has studied and taught Islamic history and Qur'ānic studies for many years, I found myself both learning from and reflecting on the material in new ways. The way the book weaves together Qur'ānic passages, authentic ahādīth, and lessons from the lives of Prophets—particularly in the context of Bani Israel, is both enlightening and timely. It helps the reader understand why Allah mentions Bani Israel so frequently: not to criticize them alone, but to warn us, to teach us, and to inspire us to live with Īmān, gratitude, and steadfastness. What also sets this work apart is how it addresses the contemporary reader, especially our youth, with honesty and challenge. It reminds us that true victory comes from Allah, that we must rise above romanticized calls for heroes of the past and instead become people of action, knowledge, and tawakkul in the present. The practical insights, spiritual reflections, and reminders of divine mercy sprinkled throughout the book make it a rich source for both personal and communal reflection"

Shaykh Dr. Furhan Zubairi
Dean, Institute of Knowledge, USA

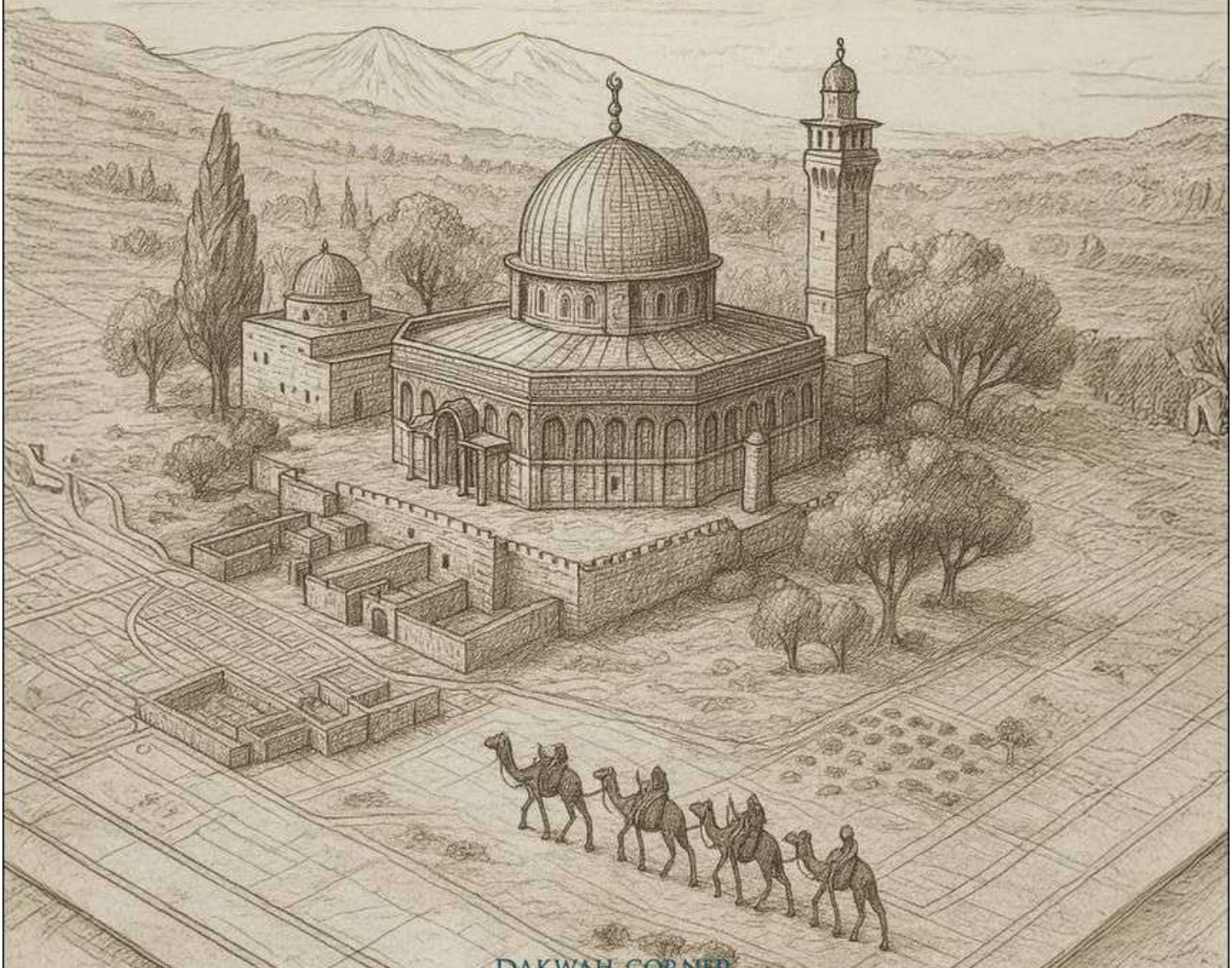


Mohammad Zahid Ibn Tariq

AL-QUDS

THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

The Chronicles of Bani Israel



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BOOKSTORE

Mohammad Zahid Ibn Tariq

AL-QUDS

THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

The Chronicles of Bani Israel

TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN PALESTINE,

This small work is dedicated to you. Like the legacy of ʿUmar al-Fārūq رضي الله عنه that clearly demarcated truth and falsehood, you have stood strong in the Blessed Land and torn the mask from the powers of the world that claim to be flag-bearers of peace while their hands are dripping in blood. You have taught us Muslims the true meaning of completely relying on Allāh, the power of *Īmān*, and living with honor while holding your head high.

I feel ashamed and don't have words for not being able to do much to help you and respond adequately to your call. Our Prophet ﷺ taught us, "Whoever among you sees evil, let him change it with his hand. If he cannot do so, then with his tongue. If he cannot do so, then with his heart, which is the weakest level of faith." I hope this small effort to educate the Muslims and the world at large is a small step towards reviving the Ummah, helping Palestine, and becoming a means of freeing Masjid al-Aqsa from the clutches of the occupation.

A small stone was enough for Prophet Dāwūd عليه السلام to overcome Jālūt and it's the small stones that start an avalanche. May Allāh Accept this small stone moved in the path towards a free Palestine.

Publisher's Note

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Jerusalem – al-Quds – is far more than a city etched in ancient stone; it stands as a living testament to our profound spiritual legacy. It is the sacred ground where the call of Tawḥīd reverberated through the voices of the Prophets, and a timeless witness to divine revelation, enduring resistance, and continuous revival across the ages.

For a considerable time, we earnestly sought – with hope guiding our hearts – the ideal material that would enable us to fulfill our duty towards al-Quds, a land imbued with profound significance for every believing soul. We extended our reach to esteemed voices – including writers, scholars, and passionate activists from Jerusalem – yearning to forge something truly meaningful for this sacred cause. Regrettably, we did not encounter the response we had anticipated. The silence was particularly poignant, given that the cause is so noble, urgent, and undeniably deserving of our united voices and collective efforts.

This book, *History of al-Quds* by Mohammad Zahid Mateen, transcends a mere chronicle of historical events. It serves as a potent reminder that remembering Jerusalem is not an act of nostalgia; rather, it is an act of worship, a steadfast assertion of truth, and a reclamation of our sacred memory. It guides readers on an immersive journey through time, where each step retraces the paths of the Prophets, and every chapter summons us back to our origins as an Ummah bound by faith, justice, and shared responsibility.

We are truly honored to publish this timely and indispensable work. With a masterful blend of scholarly depth and heartfelt sincerity, the author seamlessly connects the past to the present, impressing upon us that al-Quds is not merely a subject for history books but a living trust that demands our unwavering awareness, resolute commitment, and decisive action. Through meticulous research and profound spiritual insight, he illuminates the lessons of the Prophets, unveils the sanctity of al-Aqsa, and celebrates the unwavering fortitude of those who continue to protect it.

The endorsements from a diverse array of respected scholars, historians, activists, and imams underscore the significance and urgent relevance of

this book. It offers invaluable clarity and inspiration during a time when both are desperately needed.

Among the special features of this book is the inclusion of rare and captivating photographs of Masjid al-Aqsa and al-Quds, captured exclusively by Brother Muhsin Kelby رحمه الله . These extraordinary images – many unveiled here for the very first time – offer readers a profound visual journey into the sacred beauty, timeless majesty, and enduring spirit of Jerusalem.

The first draft of this book was presented for review to a distinguished scholar from Gaza, who expressed amazement at its depth and structure. He passed away before he could contribute further to the project. May Allāh have Mercy on him.

As bombs continue to fall on Gaza and cries for justice resound across the globe, the brazen Zionist aggression has transcended all limits, with the so-called champions of civilization enabling the bloodshed of countless innocent lives. Amidst this grim reality, this book emerges as a beacon for all who seek to understand, to remember, and to act with unwavering faith and integrity.

It is our sincere prayer that this work will revive hearts, enlighten minds, and ignite within a new generation the love to learn about and steadfastly defend al-Quds with knowledge, wisdom, and unshakeable *Īmān*.

May Allāh accept this humble endeavor and make it a great source of benefit for all who read it – each engagement a contribution towards the noble cause of freeing al-Quds, a future in which we firmly believe.

Farid Abu Ahmed
Dakwah Corner Bookstore
Thursday, 22 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1446 AH / 19 June 2025 CE

Foreword

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Jerusalem – al-Quds – is not merely a city. It is the soul of sacred history, the echo of revelation, and the flame that continues to burn in the heart of the Ummah. From being the first Qiblah to the site of the Isrā' and Mi'rāj, it holds a central place in Islam's worldview – its creed, its history, and its future. And today, more than ever, its story must be told.

I was honored to read this blessed work on the city of Jerusalem – a city that continues to reside in the heart and memory, and which represents, in the conscience of the Ummah, a symbol of steadfastness, sanctity, and the struggle for dignity. What you have written in this book is not merely a historical account of a city, but rather a revival of a cause, a renewal of a covenant, and a bridge built between a noble past and a struggling present.

As a son of Gaza, where the air is heavy with sorrow but the spirit remains unbroken, I write these words with deep love and a heart weighed down with grief for Jerusalem. This book is not just a historical record; it is an act of resistance, a reminder, and a revival of hearts. It reclaims the sacred story of a land that has long been misunderstood and stripped of its true meaning.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ described Jerusalem with remarkable precision, despite never having seen it completely with his eyes. This was among his miracles and a proof of his prophethood. His Night Journey not only honored the land, but made it part of our Islamic creed. This is the city of the prophets – where more than 25 messengers walked and prayed – granting it a profound and lasting sanctity for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Your words touched upon the truth, and your style bore the trust with honesty. This work deserves to be read – not merely for knowledge – but out of duty, by every human being who still values truth and dignity.

This book offers more than a timeline of conquests and conflicts over Jerusalem and Masjid al-Aqsa. It portrays Jerusalem as a place where divine messages descended, where empires collapsed and others rose, and where the hearts of believers have always turned. From the days of Prophets Ya'qūb, Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Zakarīyā, and Yaḥyá عليهم السلام, to the bravery of those who reclaimed it after the Crusades, to the sincere defenders resisting the colonial

divisions of our modern era – this book tells the truth: Jerusalem has always been a test of faith, courage, and responsibility.

Today, as bombs rain down on Gaza and its children are buried beneath the rubble, we must ask ourselves: What does Jerusalem mean to us now? The war on Gaza is intricately bound to the fate of Jerusalem. They are deeply connected – one bleeding, the other shackled by chains and occupation.

This book comes at a time of great sorrow, but also of great clarity – for those whose hearts are alive. It challenges indifference, refutes false narratives, and calls us back to the roots of our faith and the spirit of our Ummah.

I was pleased with your kind invitation to write the introductory foreword for this book, and I am even more pleased to place my name at the forefront of a work I consider vital for anyone who believes in truth and feels the significance of Jerusalem – no matter how distant they may be.

Let this book be a reminder and a revival – for Jerusalem is not exclusive to Palestinians. It is a sacred trust carried by every Muslim. It is a symbol of resistance against injustice and a place where faith, history, and hope meet.

To read this book is to connect with our past, to stand firm in our present, and to hope for a future in which justice returns to the Holy Land. May it awaken hearts, guide minds, and move us to act.

O Allāh, protect Jerusalem, free Gaza, and unite us upon the truth.

Shaykh Dr. Ibrahim A. Dremali
Tuesday, 7 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1446 AH / 3 June 2025 CE

Foreword

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Al-Quds (Jerusalem) holds a central and irreplaceable place in the faith, history, and consciousness of Muslims. It is home to Masjid al-Aqsa, the first Qiblah of Islam and the third holiest sanctuary after Makkah and Madīnah. For many decades, the place has not only been under the brutal Israeli military occupation but also under a sustained machination of disinformation and misinformation to distort the historical facts, ground realities, and the just cause of the Palestinian freedom struggle. In such a scenario, *History of al-Quds: The Chronicles of Bani Israel* by Mohammad Zahid Ibn Tariq is a relevant and deeply thoughtful contribution to contemporary Islamic historical writing. The book succeeds in doing what many works on Jerusalem struggle to achieve: it presents a coherent historical narrative while remaining methodologically rooted in classical Islamic scholarship.

One of the book's greatest strengths lies in its methodological balance. The author carefully integrates Quranic verses, authentic hadiths, and responsibly selected historical reports without allowing any single source to overshadow the epistemic authority of the Quran and Sunnah. This approach reflects scholarly maturity and adherence to Islamic standards. The content is presented in a clear, accessible style, making complex historical developments intelligible for both academic and general readers. By tracing the relationship between Bani Israel, al-Quds, and divine testing, the author effectively transforms history into practical reflection. The work consistently reminds the reader that the Quranic discourse on Bani Israel is not merely descriptive but profoundly instructive for the Muslim Ummah. Equally commendable is the author's ability to connect past and present without resorting to polemics.

One of the most commendable aspects of the author's work is his clear, principled, and evidence-based dismantling of popular misconceptions surrounding resistance, particularly the false claim that boycotts are ineffective or merely symbolic. Rather than appealing to emotion alone, the author grounds his argument in Islamic history, jurisprudence, and rational analysis, demonstrating that economic and social boycotts are neither novel nor

reactionary tools. He shows how boycotts have been Islamically sanctioned and strategically employed in earlier periods of Muslim history as a legitimate means of opposing injustice when direct confrontation was not possible. By situating contemporary boycotts within this well-established Islamic framework, the author restores confidence in their intellectual and practical value. His method is especially effective in shifting the discussion from despair to disciplined action, proposing to readers a realistic and faith-rooted strategy for the present and future. This balanced approach – combining textual evidence, historical precedent, and strategic foresight – makes the work both intellectually convincing and deeply empowering for conscientious readers. The discussion of Jerusalem's sanctity, Prophetic legacy, and contemporary suffering is framed with dignity, restraint, intellectual honesty, and spiritual urgency. Rather than inciting emotional reaction alone, the author calls for knowledge-based action, *tawakkul*, comprehensive reform, and intellectual responsibility.

Overall, *History of al-Quds* is not simply a historical account of a city; it is a work of remembrance, reflection, and renewal. It will be of particular value to students of Islamic history, international relations, conflict studies, educators, and readers seeking a principled understanding of Jerusalem grounded in profound scholarship, academic subtlety, and objective clarity. The book serves as a meaningful and worthy contribution to the growing body of Islamic literature on al-Quds. I extend my heartfelt gratitude and deep appreciation to my dear Brother Mohammad Zahid for this sincere, courageous, and intellectually honest contribution. His work reflects not only intellectual fervor but also a profound sense of responsibility toward the Ummah. I sincerely pray that Allāh accept this noble effort, place immense *barakah* in it, and make it a means of *ṣadaqah jāriyah* for the author. May Allāh grant him strength, sincerity, and continued *tawfīq* to produce rich, meaningful literature that benefits Muslims at large, revives consciousness, and guides future generations toward truth, justice, and principled action. *Āmīn*.

Shaykh Sajad Ahmad Mir
Sunday, 23 Jumādá al-Ākhirah 1447 AH / 14 December 2025 CE

Introduction

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All types of thanks and praise belong to Allāh, the most worthy of thanks and praise. A praise superior to all other types of praise, like the superiority of Allāh over all of His creation. All praise belongs to Allāh who bestows understanding of the Dīn upon whom He wills from His servants, and grants success to those obedient to Him. All praise is due to Him who directed mankind to recognize His Existence through His signs and left them no excuse to disobey Him as He conveyed His message to humanity through His Messengers عليهم السلام, the best of His creation. I bear witness that nothing deserves to be worshipped except Allāh alone, and I bear witness that Muḥammad ﷺ is His slave and Messenger. May Allāh bestow blessings upon him, his family, and his companions as long as the clouds bring about rain and as long as the thunder comes after the lightning.

It is very important for us as Muslims to learn, connect, understand, and reflect upon our history. In the vast tapestry of human existence, history stands as a testament to the journey of civilizations, the struggles of individuals, and the evolution of societies. Studying history is not just about memorizing names, dates, and key places where something occurred. Beyond its role as a mere record of events, history holds profound significance as a teacher, a guide, and a source of wisdom for those who seek to understand the world around them.

The importance of reading and reflecting on history cannot be overstated. To understand what is going on today, we need to understand what happened in the past. Why? The past has shaped our present, and our present will shape the future. Studying history helps us to find our own identity and understand our own selves better. In reality, we are reliving history. Learning history helps you appreciate what you have inherited, and it helps you understand people both around you and in the extended community. Learning from history helps us avoid falling into the same mistakes again. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ beautifully summed it up when he said, "The believer is not stung from the same hole twice." [Al-Bukhārī]

When setting out to read more about Bani Israel, Masjid al-Aqsa, and Palestine, I was faced with a slight dilemma. Most books were either too

focused on Tafsīr, where it was very easy for the reader to lose track, as the stories are usually broken and spread across the Quran, or they were written from a heavy orientalist lens and did not do justice to us Muslims. This book is a short attempt to present in a narrative style, the story of Bani Israel, the establishment of Jerusalem, and Masjid al-Aqsa, the third holiest site in Islam, all the way from inception till date.

In this book, we have quoted extensively from the Quran and authentic narrations from the Sunnah. Where needed, we have also quoted from the Isrā'īliyāt (Judeo-Christian sources) to support the narrations or give additional context to help the reader get a better picture of how events unfolded. Abdullāh ibn ʿAmr ﵄ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Convey (my teachings) to the people even if it were a single sentence, and narrate the stories of Bani Israel, for it is not sinful to do so. And whoever tells a lie on me intentionally, will surely take his place in the (Hell) Fire." [Al-Bukhārī] It is well known that Abdullāh ibn ʿAmr ﵄ discovered two loads of books of the Ahl al-Kitāb (People of the Scripture) on the Day of Yarmūk, and he would occasionally narrate from them.

This is, of course, provided there is no contradiction to the Sharīʿah. This is why we see that Abū Hurayrah ﵁ narrated that the Ahl al-Kitāb (Jews) used to recite the Tawrāh in Hebrew and explain it in Arabic to the Muslims. On that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Do not believe the People of the Scripture or disbelieve them, but say, 'We believe in Allāh and what is revealed to us.'" (Sūrat al-Baqarah, 2:136)" [Al-Bukhārī]

Commenting on the hadith, "Narrate from Bani Israel, there is no sin in it", Imam al-Shāfiʿī ﵀ said, "It is well known that the Prophet ﷺ did not permit the narration of what is known to be falsehood. Rather, he only allowed the narrations from those who narrated them when their truthfulness or falsehood was unknown, but he did not permit it from those who were known to be liars." [Al-Risālah]

Thus, the meaning of the hadith, "Narrate from Bani Israel," refers to that which is not falsehood. And his statement, "There is no sin in it," means that there is no restriction in you narrating from them now. This is because the reports of restriction and censure on narrating from them and looking into their books were, in the beginning, then the ruling became relaxed. This is not for everyone, rather only for those that have a deep understanding of the religion and have the ability to distinguish between the truth and falsehood as Abdullāh ibn ʿAmr ﵄ did when he discovered two loads from the Ahl al-Kitab and would narrate from them only that which the Sharīʿah permitted." [Isrā'īliyāt wa atharuhā]

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah ﷺ said in his *Muqaddimah fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr*, "However, these Isrā'īliyāt traditions are to be quoted as supporting evidence and not as primary sources. Isrā'īliyāt traditions are of three types: first, authentic as attested by our own sources; second, false as attested by our own sources; and third, that which does not fall into the two previous categories, where we cannot judge them to be authentic or inauthentic. One is allowed to quote from this third type as justified previously, and the majority of these Isrā'īlī traditions are contained in matters with no immediate Islamic religious benefit..."

To close this matter, Imam Ibn Kathīr ﷺ stated in his *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, "We do not record the Isrā'īliyāt except those which the Lawgiver has permitted, i.e. those which do not contradict the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ. These are stories which are neither believed nor belied, and they have been recorded because they provide details of unclarified narratives that we have, or they provide names for people and places that have only been mentioned in passing in our Revelation, due to there being no benefit in specifying them for us. Thus, we have reported them in order to provide extra detail and not with the intention of citing them as evidence or placing any reliance on them. Only the Book of Allāh and the authentic Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ may be relied upon and depended upon. It is from Allāh that we seek help, and it is He in Whom we place our trust; there is no help and no power except in Allāh, the All-Powerful, the Most Wise, the Most High, the Almighty."

We also hope that the reader takes this opportunity to reflect and learn from the stories of the Prophets of Allāh عليهم السلام who were sent to Bani Israel. That being said, our Imam, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal ﷺ said, "Three things have no *isnād*: Tafsīr, Malāḥim (narrations about the Last Hour), and Maghāzī (stories from the Sīrah, especially battles). This is because most of their narrations are of the *mursal* type, such as narrations reported by ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr, al-Shaʿbī, al-Zuhrī, Mūsā ibn ʿUqbah and Ibn Isḥāq." [Majmūʿ al-Fatāwá]

Why write about Jerusalem? It is famously said that the heart of the Ummah is al-Shām. The heart of al-Shām is Palestine. The heart of Palestine is Jerusalem, and the heart of Jerusalem is Masjid al-Aqsa. Others say Masjid al-Haram denotes our relationship with Allāh. Masjid al-Nabawi denotes our relationship with Allāh's Messenger ﷺ. Masjid al-Aqsa denotes our relationship as an Ummah. So anytime one wants to feel the pulse of the Ummah, one can see the condition of Jerusalem, and they will get an idea. May Allāh Aid us.

Why write about Bani Israel? Firstly, because they are closely connected to Masjid al-Aqsa and, more importantly, because there is a reason that Allāh has mentioned Bani Israel so many times across the Quran. The name Israel occurs 43 times in the Quran. Twice referring to Prophet Israel (i.e. Yaʿqūb) ﷺ himself and the rest to Bani Israel, the progeny of Prophet Israel ﷺ. It is for us to learn from their mistakes. It also gives us an immense boost and a glimpse at the Mercy of Allāh. As you read through these upcoming pages, at the back of your mind, I want you to reflect upon the multiple times that Bani Israel engaged in outright disobedience, and yet Allāh gave them a chance to repent and start anew.

If we start reading the Quran from the beginning till Sūrat al-Aʿrāf alone, we will be surprised that Bani Israel can be forgiven despite the kind of transgression and crimes they had committed. Yet Allāh tells them to turn back to Him, for He is the Most Forgiving and Most Merciful.

At any moment, we are welcome back to Allāh. Look at the way Allāh opens the doors for penance and atonement regardless of what the person might have done in the past and no matter how far they have transgressed. Many times, people are given a very harsh image of Islam and Allāh. The doors of repentance are open till just before one sees the angel of death, or before his soul reaches his throat, or the sun rises from the West.

Allāh says,

قُلْ يَٰعِبَادِيَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا۟ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا۟ مِن رَّحْمَةِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ ٱلذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلْغَفُورُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥٣﴾

Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves (by sinning), do not despair of the Mercy of Allāh. Indeed, Allāh Forgives ALL sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." [Sūrat al-Zumar, 39:53]

In the *āyah* above, we learn about *isrāf* (from أَسْرَفُوا), which means to exceed the limits excessively and inordinately. People, at times, say that there is hardly a sin that they have not committed. Of course, there are many sins that they didn't commit, but it's a way of showing the large number of sins they might have indulged in. How it works is that for every sin that is committed and repented from, Allāh adds in place of that a reward instead. Allāh says,

إِلَّا مَن تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَٰلِحًا فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ ٱللَّهُ سَيِّـَٔاتِهِمْ حَسَنَٰتٍ ۗ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿٧٠﴾

As for those who repent, believe, and do good deeds, they are the ones whose evil deeds Allāh will change into good deeds. For Allāh is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. [Sūrat al-Furqān, 25:70]

This is an incentive from Allāh for those who wrongly think that if they want to come back to Allāh, they will not be accepted because they have committed too many sins. There is no such thing as too many sins that cannot be forgiven. No matter how far off a person has strayed, as long as they turn back to Allāh, they will find Him ready to Accept them back.

Allāh says,

وَتِلْكَ ٱلْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

And We present these examples to mankind so that they might reflect. [Sūrat al-Ḥashr, 59:21]

Commenting on this, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Saʿdī رحمه الله said, "Allāh then informs us that He strikes examples for mankind and makes the Halal and Haram clear for His slaves in His Book so that they might reflect and ponder over His *Āyāt*. Reflecting on them opens up the treasures of knowledge for the slave and makes the pathways of good and evil clear to him. It also encourages him to have good character and excellent traits, as well as restraining him from poor character. So there is nothing more beneficial for a slave than reflecting and pondering over the Quran and its messages." [Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān]

Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Allāh is more pleased with the repentance of His servant than one of you who has lost his camel on a journey in an empty desert while it carried his food and drink. Having lost hope, he lies down in the shade and despairs over his camel, but all of a sudden, he finds the camel standing over him. He takes hold of its reins and out of joy he proclaims, 'O Allāh, you are my servant, and I am your Lord.' He makes a mistake due to his extreme joy." [Muslim]

Our Shaykh, Dr. Ibrahim Nuhu حفظه الله said, "Calamities are a warning from Allāh. It is Allāh informing the people that Allāh's Laws or Commands are being disobeyed. The cycle for a sinner is such that committing one sin opens the door to another sin. This is a punishment from Allāh. When a person sins, they should realize their mistake and return back to Allāh in repentance.

Whenever you are suffering, look into your relationship with Allāh. Allāh has promised us good, but what matters is that we do our part of the deal. Allāh asks for only two things in return for success: *Īmān* and putting that *Īmān* into action. Allāh promises to take care of all of a person's worries when the hereafter becomes their primary worry. Tell me this: how is it possible for a person to fail in life when Allāh is looking after his affairs? Make sure you take care of your ʿAqīdah, and your *Īmān*, and try to keep perfecting

your relationship with Allāh."

As I write these pages, the past few months have been really heavy upon the Ummah, as with every minute we hear devastating news coming in about our brothers and sisters from around the world, especially in Palestine. As our elders and scholars deal with things at their level, I would like to raise a few points for our youth to ponder over:

1. All over social media, we have been seeing posts on the lines of, "If only we had Khālid ibn al-Walīd رضي الله عنه today." Though I completely understand where this is coming from, we need to pause and take a step back. Two points I would like to raise here: one is from an *'aqīdah* angle of having trust in Allāh, and the second is actually following in the footsteps of Khālid ibn al-Walīd رضي الله عنه.

    a. This statement is not something new. This was said so many times during the caliphate of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه to such an extent that 'Umar al-Fārūq رضي الله عنه eventually removed Khālid رضي الله عنه from his position, as people began attributing victory to Khālid رضي الله عنه instead of Allāh. This is, of course, not taking away anything from the legend that is Khālid ibn al-Walīd رضي الله عنه. Rather, it is to remind ourselves that all these heroes are just agents of success, and success is not because of them. True success is from Allāh alone.
    b. During the battle against the Tartars, the Sultan exclaimed, looking at the large numbers of the Tartar army, "Yā Khālid ibn al-Walīd!" On hearing this, Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah رحمه الله corrected him and said, "Do not say this, rather say 'Ya Allāh,' and seek the help of Allāh, the One Lord who alone can give victory, and say 'O The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense, You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help.' " At the end of the day, the Muslims emerged victorious even though the odds were severely against them.
    c. Secondly, we need to walk the talk as well. Khālid رضي الله عنه was a man of action. In Israel, young men and women have to do a mandatory three years of military service. Their entire population is battle-ready and physically fit to a certain degree. The largest number of startups and doctorate holders are based in or emerging from Israel. Simple question: Where are we in comparison to our degree of preparation, and what steps are we taking to be fit both physically and intellectually?

2. We talk much about Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī رحمه الله and his heroics in liberating al-Quds as well. Rightly so. What else do we know about him? Is he there just to be an Islamic superman that we refer to in such instances, or do we study and learn from his blueprint of success? Do we know how he honored and supported the scholars? Do we know how he exerted himself in studying and gaining knowledge? When his army moved, it had within it the likes of Shaykh al-Ḥanābilah Muwaffaq al-Dīn Ibn Qudāmah رحمه الله and other scholars. Do we even know who our scholars are locally, and what our connection is with them?

Ustādh Muzzammil Ahmed حفظه الله beautifully said, "History is a book written by a handful of men and their deeds. While most remain engrossed in merely browsing the pages of the past and present open in front of them, the wise grab hold of their quills and start etching the future that will ultimately find itself on display when the pages are turned."

Numbers have hardly ever been on the side of Muslims when confronted in battle, except in a few cases. This shows us that it's more about the quality rather than the quantity. The reason such small numbers could take on and emerge victorious against impossible numbers of the opposition was *tawakkul* (faith and reliance). Complete faith in the Promise of Allāh, utmost sincerity of intention and more importantly, following the commandments of the Prophet ﷺ without question. They coupled that with *ḥarakah* (movement) to get *barakah* because we are taught to tie the camel before we leave things to Allāh. Contrast that to what we are today – large in numbers but hardly any quality, looking for loopholes to get around our obligations.

Our Shaykh, Dr. Sajid Umar حفظه الله advises us that even today – yes, even today – if we are sincere in our intention and completely rely upon the aid of Allāh alone and put in the work, Allāh out of His immense mercy will send down angels to help us in our difficulties.

Our Shaykh, Dr. Ibrahim Nuhu حفظه الله said, "Those who depend on Allāh with utmost *taqwá* and *tawakkul*, Allāh promises to increase them in *rizq*, fulfil all their desired plans, and elevate them in their rankings, provided they show patience in the process."

Always remember the statement of Imam Ibn Rajab رحمه الله while we work. He said, "Having patience while waiting for relief is a form of worship since hardship never lasts." [Majmū' Rasā'il]

Shaykh Dr. Ekrima Sai'd Sabri حفظه الله, the Grand Imām of Masjid al-Aqsa, advised us in Kuala Lumpur, "Masjid al-Aqsa is more than a masjid. It bears

a rich history and spiritual legacy that transcends time. It is the first Qiblah for Muslims. It's also the place where the events of Isrā' and Mi'rāj unfolded, in which our Prophet ﷺ travelled from the Earth to the heavens and back to convey the Message of Allāh. It's good to show love towards Palestine, but remember that we have the power to do more. We must make an effort to learn the history behind how Palestine was occupied, so we understand the struggles of our Palestinian brothers and sisters."

Another reason that gives me pleasure to be a part of this is because of a treasured family legacy. Based on family records, our family traces our lineage back to the Ṣaḥābī, 'Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit رضي الله عنه, through his son Muḥammad from Umm Ḥarām bint Milhān رضي الله عنها from Banu Najjar. [Zikr-e-Aḥsan] 'Ubādah was appointed as the first Chief Judge of Jerusalem by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه. The couple settled in Palestine, where he taught the people the Quran and the hadiths of the Prophet ﷺ.

The Prophet ﷺ taught us, "Whoever does not thank people has not thanked Allāh." [Abū Dāwūd] I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Salman Mujahid, Khalid Hussain, Saada Bello, Khidr Nasir, Zaf Abbas, and Shafa Tasneem for their invaluable comments and insightful feedback on the initial manuscript, which greatly enriched this book. I would like to thank my teachers, Shaykh Dr. Ibrahim Nuhu, Shaykh Maqsoodul Hasan Faizi, Shaykh Zafarul Hasan Madani, Shaykh Kamil Ahmed, and Shaykh Dr. Ahsan Hanif حفظهم الله for simplifying matters and guiding me via their many works. Additionally, I am deeply grateful to the GlobalSadaqah team for providing a platform and for affording me the opportunity to contribute to the cause of Palestine for nearly a decade. Last, but certainly not least, I thank my parents for their unending encouragement and steadfast presence throughout all my projects and endeavors. Their unwavering support has been my pillar of strength. May Allāh Accept the meager deeds we do for His sake.

Mohammad Zahid Mateen
Monday, 1 Ramadan 1446H / 1 March 2025
Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

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◆ 1 ◆

THE VIRTUES OF MASJID AL-AQSA AND AL-SHĀM

The Virtues of al-Quds

Masjid al-Aqsa is one of the three greatest masjids in Islam. It ranks third after Masjid al-Haram in Makkah and Masjid al-Nabawi in Madīnah. It is the only masjid mentioned in the Quran by name other than Masjid al-Haram. It was the first Qiblah of the Muslims. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ prayed for more of his life towards Masjid al-Aqsa than he did towards the Ka'bah when the Qiblah was changed after his migration to Madīnah. The land of al-Aqsa, or al-Quds, is known as Jerusalem to the Christians and Jews. This land is considered sacred as well as blessed in their religions. It was the land of the Prophets of Allāh عليهم السلام. Add to that, all three religions believe it to be the site where the events leading to the End of the World will unfold.

Al-Quds is at the heart of the larger blessed land of al-Shām, which refers to the lands that include modern-day Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Northeast Egypt, Southwest Turkey, parts of Northwest Saudi Arabia, and some nearby areas around them. Allāh immortalized the mention of Jerusalem and Masjid al-Aqsa till the Day of Judgment when He told us,

سُبْحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِۦ لَيْلًا مِّنَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْأَقْصَا ٱلَّذِى بَٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِنَآ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ۝١

Glory be to the One who Took His Servant (Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ) by night from Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have Blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing. [Sūrat al-Isrā', 17:1]

Al-Isrā' wa al-Mi'rāj is one of the greatest signs and miracles that were given to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ after the Quran. Al-Isrā' refers to his Night Journey from Makkah to Jerusalem, and al-Mi'rāj refers to his Ascension into the Heavens.

Linguistically, *quds* (Al-Quds being the definitive) refers to a sanctified or purified place. By purified, it could refer to the fact that oppressors or evil

◆ 2 ◆

THE ORIGINS

Allāh Created our father Ādam ﷺ with His Hands and Blew His spirit into him. Allāh taught Ādam the names of the different creations of Allāh. Prophet Ādam ﷺ is mentioned 25 times in the Quran.

Allāh likens the creation of Prophet ʿĪsá (Jesus) ﷺ to that of Prophet Ādam ﷺ when He says,

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ ءَادَمَ ۖ خَلَقَهُۥ مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿٥٩﴾

Indeed, the example of ʿĪsá in the sight of Allāh is like that of Ādam. He created him from dust, then said to him, "Be!" And he was! [Sūrat Āl ʿImrān, 3:59]

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Indeed Allāh, the Almighty, created Ādam from a handful that He took from the whole of the earth. So the children of Ādam are in accordance with the earth: some of them are red, some are white, some are black, some are yellow, and some are a mixture (between these different colors); some are smooth, some are rough, some are bad, and some are good." [Aḥmad]

Imam Ibn Kathīr ﷺ said, "Sometimes Ādam ﷺ talked to the angels, but they were preoccupied with worshipping Almighty Allāh. Therefore, Ādam felt lonely. One day, he slept, and when he awoke, he found near his head a woman gazing at his face with beautiful, tender eyes. The angels asked him her name, and he replied, 'Ḥawwā' (Eve, which means living things).' They asked, 'Why did you call her Ḥawwā'?' Ādam said, 'Because she was created from me and I am a living being.'" [Qaṣaṣ al-Anbiyā']

In a similar vein, Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ said that Allāh took one of Ādam's left ribs and made flesh grow in its place, while Ādam was asleep and unaware. Allāh then created Ādam's wife, Ḥawwā', from his rib and made her a woman, so that she could be a comfort for him. When Ādam woke up and saw Ḥawwā' next to him, it was claimed, he said, "My flesh and blood, my wife." [Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr]

Allāh established the First Covenant with Banī Ādam. Allāh says,

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنۢ بَنِىٓ ءَادَمَ مِن ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ۖ

◆ 4 ◆

THE RISE OF BANI ISRAEL

Prophet Ismāʿīl ﷺ settled in Arabia, whereas Prophet Isḥāq ﷺ continued to stay in Palestine. Prophet Yaʿqūb or Israel ﷺ was the latter's descendant who continued to call people to Islam and take care of Masjid al-Aqsa. From among his sons, Prophet Yūsuf was the first to be blessed with Prophethood. Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ is mentioned twenty-seven times in the Quran. It is reported in Judeo-Christian sources that he lived in the period of 1745–1635 BCE.

Abū Hurayrah ﷺ narrated, "The people said, 'O Allāh's Messenger ﷺ! Who is the most honorable amongst the people (in Allāh's Sight)?' He said, 'The most righteous amongst them.' They said, 'We do not ask you about this.' He said, 'Then Yūsuf, Allāh's Prophet, the son of Allāh's Prophet (Yaʿqūb), the son of Allāh's Prophet (Isḥāq), the son of Allāh's Khalīl (Ibrāhīm).'" [Al-Bukhārī]

The Jealousy of Prophet Yūsuf's Brothers

One of the unique aspects of this story is how it was revealed to us. Usually, we see that the story of Prophet Mūsá ﷺ or Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ is spread across different parts of the Quran. By contrast, Sūrat Yūsuf was revealed all at one time, and the complete story of Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ was chronologically related instead of being presented in fragments throughout the Quran in stages. It was revealed during the Year of Sadness to console, support, and strengthen the resolve of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, who had just faced a public boycott by the Quraysh and was suffering the loss of his beloved wife Khadījah ﷺ, and his uncle Abū Ṭālib.

Imam al-Baghawī ﷺ said, "One of the Salaf said, 'No one who is saddened and hears Sūrat Yūsuf except that he will feel at ease.'" [Tafsīr al-Baghawī]

Prophet Yaʿqūb ﷺ had eleven children, and he loved Yūsuf ﷺ a lot. Seeing their father spend time and always ask about Yūsuf led to a lot of jealousy in the hearts of his half-brothers. When he was less than ten years old, Yūsuf had a dream that he related to his father, "O my father, indeed I

Prophet Yaʿqūb ﷺ. The sons placed the shirt of Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ over his face, and his sight was restored to him. He came to Egypt with the rest of Banī Israel. The land of Palestine was still inhabited by the Canaanites. The Canaanites had been in these lands before Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ came there, and they were there even when Prophet Yaʿqūb ﷺ migrated to Egypt with his people.

We see the shirt of Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ mentioned three times in three different scenarios. It was used as a lie, a proof, and a cure.

- It was used as a lie by his brothers to tell Prophet Yaʿqūb ﷺ that he had been devoured by wolves.
- It was used as proof to clear Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ from the false allegations of *zinā*.
- It was used as a cure for Prophet Yaʿqūb's ﷺ blindness.

Allāh tells us that Prophet Yaʿqūb ﷺ went to be reunited with Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ in Egypt. Yūsuf ﷺ had asked his brothers to bring all of their families, and they all departed their area and left Palestine for Egypt. When Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ received the news of their approach to Egypt, he went out to receive them. The king ordered the princes and notable people to go out in the receiving party with Yūsuf to meet Allāh's Prophet Yaʿqūb ﷺ. It is said that the king also went out with them to meet Prophet Yaʿqūb ﷺ.

On seeing him, Prophet Yūsuf's ﷺ parents and brothers prostrated before him, and they were thirteen people in total. At this, he said to Prophet Yaʿqūb ﷺ, "O my father! This is the interpretation of my dream from before..." He was referring to the dream that he narrated to his father decades before, where eleven stars, the sun, and the moon were prostrating to him.

This was not a prostration of worship. Such a prostration is only for Allāh Alone. It is important to note that prostrating as a form of greeting people of power and authority out of respect was allowed in the Sharīʿah of the previous Prophets. This practice was allowed in the Sharīʿah of Ādam ﷺ until the Sharīʿah of Prophet ʿĪsá ﷺ. Allāh Knows Best. In the Sharīʿah of our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, this was prohibited and made exclusive only for Allāh Alone, the Most High.

We see this in practice when Muʿādh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه visited al-Shām, he found them prostrating before their priests. When he returned to Madīnah, he prostrated before the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, who asked him, "What is this, O Muʿādh?" Muʿādh said, "I saw that they prostrate before their priests. However, you, O Messenger of Allāh, deserve more to be prostrated

◆ 5 ◆

FROM PROPHET DĀWŪD TO THE FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

Bani Israel were sent Prophet after Prophet in succession by Allāh. Yet, they remained defiant and disobedient.

The time of Prophets Dāwūd ﷺ and his son Sulaymān ﷺ is unique and is even considered the Golden Age of al-Aqsa. They were Prophets of Allāh who were also kings. Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ is mentioned 16 times in the Quran, whereas Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ is mentioned 17 times in the Quran. It is reported in Judeo-Christian sources that Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ lived in the period of 1041–971 BCE, where Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ lived in the period of 989–931 BCE.

Prophet Shammil and the Appointment of Talut

Both Islamic and Jewish sources mention how Prophet Dāwūd (David) ﷺ fought Jālūt (Goliath), who was a giant warrior from the Canaanites. These giants had oppressed Bani Israel and took possession of their holiest relics: the Ark of the Covenant – a wooden chest that housed the Sacred Tablets and other relics like the staff of Prophet Mūsá. It is reported that Prophet Mūsá and other prophets of Bani Israel would keep this chest on the frontline of the battlefield. Some reports even suggest that while Bani Israel were wandering in exile, they would use the Ark as the qiblah for their prayers. They believed that the blessings of the chest would grant them victory. When Jālūt overcame Bani Israel, he took this chest away with him. It is reported that when the Amalekites, who were the descendants of the Canaanites, defeated Bani Israel, they captured the Ark, drove them out of their homes, and took away their children to use or sell as slaves.

It was around this time that Allāh sent to them Prophet Shammil or Shamuwīl (Samuel) ﷺ. Allāh Knows best if this is the correct name. Imam al-Ṭabarī رحمه الله narrated in his *Tafsīr* that between the death of Yūshaʿ ﷺ and the sending of Shammil ﷺ was a period of 460 years. Allāh Knows best.

Bani Israel were distraught at their condition and asked their prophet to find a way out of their misery. They asked Prophet Shammil's help in

Scholars differ over the death of Prophet Zakarīyā ﷺ. Some opine that it was a natural death, whereas a large number opine that he was murdered just like his son. It is narrated that the ruler also murdered Prophet Zakarīyā ﷺ after murdering Prophet Yaḥyá ﷺ. Some reports suggest that the tyrant ruler had his forces go after and attack him despite him having sought refuge inside Masjid al-Aqsa.

It is here that his cousin, Prophet ʿĪsá ﷺ will most probably return and lead the Muslims to Jerusalem. The place where the last martyred prophet of Bani Israel is buried is where the last prophet of Bani Israel will return. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "ʿĪsá, the son of Maryam, will descend at the white minaret in the eastern side of Damascus, wearing two garments lightly dyed and placing his hands on the wings of two angels. When he lowers his head, it drips water; and when he raises it, beads like pearls fall from it." [Muslim]

Prophet ʿĪsá Takes Charge of Bani Israel

Following the tragic martyrdom of Prophet Yaḥyá ﷺ, a profound sense of grief spread among the faithful, especially Prophet ʿĪsá ﷺ, who was not just Yaḥyá's cousin by relation but also a brother in Prophethood. ʿĪsá retreated to Masjid al-Aqsa seeking solace and guidance in the midst of these turbulent times. It was during this moment of reflection and devotion, on the 18th of Ramadan, that Angel Jibrīl ﷺ descended from the heavens, bringing with him the divine revelation of the Injīl (Gospel). In the sacred confines of Masjid al-Aqsa, ʿĪsá received the scripture that confirmed the Tawrāh and served as guidance, mercy, and light for the Bani Israel.

Allāh says,

وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰٓ ءَاثَـٰرِهِم بِعِيسَى ٱبْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ ۖ وَءَاتَيْنَـٰهُ ٱلْإِنجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

Then in the footsteps of the prophets, We sent ʿĪsá, son of Maryam, confirming the Tawrāh revealed before him. And We gave him the Injīl containing guidance and light and confirming what was revealed in the Tawrāh – a guide and a lesson to the God-fearing. [Sūrat al-Mā'idah, 5:46]

Explaining his own mission, Prophet ʿĪsá ﷺ says, and that is recorded in the Quran,

وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَىَّ مِنَ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ وَلِأُحِلَّ لَكُم بَعْضَ ٱلَّذِى حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ

And (I have come) confirming what was before me of the Tawrāh and to make some of what had been prohibited for you permissible for you. [Sūrat Āl ʿImrān, 3:50]

The First Division of the Old Testament: In the Jewish canon, the Tanakh consists of twenty-four books, while in the Protestant Christian canon, the Old Testament (which is the Tanakh for Jews) comprises thirty-nine books. The first five books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are collectively called the Torah or Pentateuch. Pentateuch in Latin refers to "five books," with *penta* signifying "five" and *teuchoi* meaning "books" in the plural. In Hebrew, it is also called *chumash*, meaning five, akin to *khamsah* in Arabic. In Arabic, these five books are known as *al-Asfār al-Khamsah* (الأسفار الخمسة). The word Torah is also occasionally used to mean the Old Testament in general. This group of texts deals with the origins of the world up to the entry of the Jewish people into Canaan, the land promised to them after their exile in Egypt, or more precisely, until the death of Moses.

The Second Division of the Old Testament: The authenticity of these books has been a point of great controversy among Christians. This collection of fourteen books is called the Apocrypha. The Protestant faith, for instance, does not acknowledge the divine origin of these books. The original 1611 King James Version *did* include the Apocrypha, placed between the Old and New Testaments. It was only in later printings and by the 19th century that these books were commonly omitted from Protestant Bibles, including many King James' versions of the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox Churches do consider most of these books as canonical (referring to them as "Deuterocanonical") and include them in their Bibles.

In the early days of Christianity, many writings on Jesus were in circulation. They were not subsequently retained as being worthy of authenticity, and the Church ordered them to be hidden. They were called 'Apocrypha', which comes from the Greek word *apokryphos* (ἀπόκρυφος), meaning "hidden" or "secret." How did this come about? With the development, formulation, and official acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity in 325 CE, only the four accepted Gospels were selected, and all the other scriptures written after Jesus's birth were banned. However, leaders of the Pauline Church, who were not entirely satisfied with their doctrine of 'mysteries', which was now beginning to develop, and who recognized the validity of some of the banned books, wished to retain some of these books even though they directly contradicted the new doctrines of their Church. Accordingly, books such as these were gathered together and their availability was limited to the people in power in the Church. They became known as the Apocrypha, which means 'hidden from the people'.

The Hebrew scriptures are of two kinds: the written canon which was called Torah, and the other which was unwritten and called the Oral Law.

Top: Old City of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives with Masjid al-Aqsa (1994)
Bottom: Dome of the Chain (Qubbat al-Silsilah) (1997)

acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years." [Malachi 3:1–4]

The emphasis on the analogies "he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver," are clear indications to signify the Arabian Prophet's role in eliminating undesirable elements among believers, much like impurities are removed from metals through forging or dirt from clothes with soap, ultimately strengthening the community.

Al-Isrāʾ wa al-Miʿrāj: Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in Jerusalem

Allāh immortalized the mention of Jerusalem and Masjid al-Aqsa till the Day of Judgment when He told us,

سُبۡحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِيٓ أَسۡرَىٰ بِعَبۡدِهِۦ لَيۡلٗا مِّنَ ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡأَقۡصَا ٱلَّذِي بَٰرَكۡنَا حَوۡلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنۡ ءَايَٰتِنَآۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلۡبَصِيرُ ١

Glory be to the One who Took His Servant (Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ) by night from Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have Blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing. [Sūrat al-Isrāʾ, 17:1]

Al-Isrāʾ wa al-Miʿrāj is one of the greatest signs and miracles that were given to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ after the Quran. Al-Isrāʾ refers to the Night Journey from Makkah to Jerusalem, and al-Miʿrāj refers to the Ascension into the Heavens. Many people incorrectly believe that this journey was a hallucination, something that occurred in a dream, or something that was accomplished in the form of a soul and not physically. This is incorrect. This was a physical journey that happened on the same night. If al-Isrāʾ and al-Miʿrāj occurred only as a soul or in a dream, the Quraysh would not have rejected it or ridiculed him when he informed them about it. They would not have said that it took them a month by camel to reach Jerusalem and a month to come back, whereas Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ claimed that he undertook this journey in a portion of the night.

When the Prophet ﷺ saw such a thing in a dream, he was very clear about it. Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه narrated: While we were with Allāh's Messenger ﷺ, he said, "While I was sleeping, I saw myself in Jannah, and suddenly I saw a woman performing ablution beside a palace. I asked, 'Whose palace is this?' They replied, 'It is 'Umar's.' Then I remembered 'Umar's *ghīrah* (protective jealousy) and went away quickly." 'Umar wept and said, "O Allāh's Messenger ﷺ! How dare I think of my *ghīrah* being offended by you? [Al-Bukhārī]

It is one of the most well-documented journeys in the Makkan period.

◆ 7 ◆

THE CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM DURING THE CALIPHATE OF ʿUMAR

In 15 AH or 636 CE, Damascus was conquered by the Muslims after a four-month battle named the Battle of Yarmouk, as discussed previously. The Byzantines had set out with 200,000 soldiers against the Muslims, who numbered only 36,000. In the end, around 130,000 Byzantines lost their lives, while the Muslims suffered only 3,000–4,000 casualties. This was the largest defeat that the Byzantines had ever faced.

ʿAmr ibn al-Āṣ then set towards Jerusalem, and on the way, the Muslims took over Gaza, Nablus, Lydda, Jaffa, and other Palestinian cities. The Byzantines kept retreating till they had fortified themselves in Jerusalem. Khālid ibn al-Walīd was replaced by Abū ʿUbaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ as the army commander. For ten days, the Muslims laid siege to Jerusalem.

On the eleventh day, Abū ʿUbaydah reached Jerusalem. On his arrival, the Muslims erupted in cheer and praised Allāh to such a degree that the Byzantines inside thought that ʿUmar himself had arrived to lead the charge. The Patriarch told the Byzantines, "I swear on the Gospel that, if their leader is here, it signals your destruction." On hearing such words, they were surprised and asked, "How can this be?" The Patriarch answered, "From the knowledge we have of prophecy, he who conquers the length and breadth of the land, including Palestine, is the dark, tall man, whose eyes have a very black iris and a very white cornea. If he has come, there will be no way to fight him, so surrender yourselves to him." This was the description of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. The Patriarch came forth to meet the leader of the Muslims. On seeing Abū ʿUbaydah and realizing it was not ʿUmar, he went back to his people and told them to continue fighting.

The Muslims opened the gates of Jerusalem under the leadership of Abū ʿUbaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ رضي الله عنه in 638 CE during the caliphate of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه without any bloodshed, as they also considered the land to be blessed and holy, just like the Jews and Christians. They laid siege around the city for nearly four months till they succeeded. Compare this to when the Jews, Christians, and other pagans entered and took charge of the city.

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's Ascent and the Consolidation of Muslim Power

Following Nūr al-Dīn's death, his loyal followers pledged allegiance to his young son, Ismāʿīl, who was barely 11 years old. Due to his minority, a eunuch named Gumushetkin became his regent and promptly moved him to Aleppo. This power vacuum quickly led to instability: government officials engaged in widespread corruption and misappropriation of funds, despite multiple warnings from Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Observing the central government's weakness, many nearby enemies also began preparing to attack Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn.

Meanwhile, in Egypt, a major conspiracy unfolded in March 1174 CE. Led by powerful palace elites, including Mu'tamin al-Khilāfah, the black African majordomo, the plot aimed to overthrow Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and restore the Shia Fatimid dynasty. The conspirators sent secret letters to both King Amalric I of Jerusalem and William II of Sicily, seeking to coordinate a dual attack: a Crusader invasion from the Mediterranean combined with an internal coup in Cairo. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn swiftly uncovered the plot and cracked down decisively on 31 March 1174. The ringleaders were arrested and executed. Unaware of the conspiracy's failure, William II of Sicily dispatched a formidable fleet of approximately 280 ships and 30,000 men, led by Tancred of Lecce, to seize Alexandria. Though they initially penetrated the harbor, the vigilant Muslim defenders blocked the entrance with sunken ships and launched effective nighttime sorties that destroyed Crusader siege engines. Upon learning that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was advancing with reinforcements, the Sicilians abandoned the siege on 2 August. This expedition proved to be a serious defeat for the Crusader-Sicilian alliance, largely thanks to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's decisive pre-emptive action.

As events unfolded, the people of Syria earnestly requested Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn to come to Damascus and take charge amidst the growing instability. Leaving his capable brother, al-ʿĀdil Sayf al-Dīn, in charge of Egypt in 570 AH / 1174 CE, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn departed for Syria. He also dispatched a crucial letter to the Abbasid caliph al-Mustaḍīʾ, explaining his actions and seeking to lend legitimacy to his move, assuring the Caliphate of his loyalty. During Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's absence, al-ʿĀdil skillfully managed lingering threats from pro-Fatimid factions, particularly among the Sudanese and Nubian elements of the former Fatimid army. Acting with full authority, al-ʿĀdil launched decisive campaigns to eliminate these remaining threats, disband their regiments, and fully consolidate Ayyubid control over Egypt. These essential efforts ensured that no residual Fatimid influence could challenge the new Sunni regime while Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn focused on unifying Syria under his leadership.

The Conquest of Jerusalem

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn returned to Damascus with 30,000 Crusaders as prisoners walking behind him. Every group of 30 Crusaders was tied to a single rope that was held by a Muslim soldier. Qāḍī Ibn Abī ʿAṣrūn entered Damascus with the True Cross being carried upside-down before him, and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn went back to Tiberias. After years of harassing and oppressing Muslims, Allāh had humiliated the Crusaders. Allāh says,

وَلَيَنصُرَنَّ ٱللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَقَوِىٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ إِن مَّكَّنَّٰهُمْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَوُا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَأَمَرُوا۟ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا۟ عَنِ ٱلْمُنكَرِ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَٰقِبَةُ ٱلْأُمُورِ ﴿٤١﴾

Allāh will certainly help those who stand up for Him. Allāh is truly All-Powerful, Almighty. (They are) those who, if established in the land by Us, would perform prayer, pay *zakāh*, encourage what is good, and forbid what is evil. And with Allāh rests the outcome of all affairs. [Sūrat al-Ḥajj, 22:40–41]

وَمَن يَتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّهُۥ مَخْرَجًا ﴿٢﴾ وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بَٰلِغُ أَمْرِهِۦ ۚ قَدْ جَعَلَ ٱللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدْرًا ﴿٣﴾

And whoever is mindful of Allāh, He will make a way out for them, and provide for them from sources they could never imagine. And whoever puts their trust in Allāh, then He (alone) is sufficient for them. Certainly, Allāh achieves His Will. Allāh has already set a destiny for everything. [Sūrat al-Ṭalāq, 65:2–3]

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn then started preparing to move towards Jerusalem. Being a man of insight, he did not head towards Jerusalem straight away; rather, he chose to head towards the coast to conquer the Crusader cities, fortresses, and citadels that were scattered throughout that region so that they wouldn't band together and attack him. Also, taking control of these coastal strongholds would result in cutting the Crusaders in Jerusalem off from any support from Europe.

On Sunday, 25 Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 583 AH, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn besieged Tiberias. He captured its citadel and stayed there until the following Tuesday. On Wednesday, he set out towards Acre. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn stayed in Acre for some time and used it as a center for his army during the conquest of nearby fortresses such as Nasirah, Caesarea, Haifa, Sephoria, Shaqeef, Foolah, Toor, and other neighboring cities. He then moved onward and captured the cities of Nablus, Sidon, Beirut, and the region of Jubail.

He decided to move towards the city of Ashkelon because of its strategic position between Syria and Egypt. On his way to Ashkelon, he captured Ramlah, the fortress of Toron, Bethlehem, and Hebron. He also conquered the cities of Gaza, Darum, Arsuf, Natrun and Bayt Jibrīl. Al-ʿĀdil, the

taxation, especially *mukūs* (market taxes) and *iltizām* (tax farming). Mamluk emirs oppressed the common people with forced levies to fund power struggles. Plagues and famines worsened the burden. [Badāʾiʿ al-Zuhūr]

The Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II is famously remembered for dealing with the influx of Jews and Muslims expelled from Spain (1492 CE), whom he welcomed to the empire. By the early 16th century, Sultan Selim I (Yavuz Selim / Selim the Grim) consolidated power after overthrowing his own father, Bayezid II, in 918 AH / 1512 CE. In 1514 CE, in the Battle of Chaldiran, he defeated Shah Ismāʿīl of the Safavid Empire, curbing Shia influence in the region. After defeating the Safavids, he marched against the Mamluks. The ultimate clash occurred under Sultan Selim I (Selim the Grim), who launched a decisive campaign against the Mamluks. The Mamluk forces suffered a catastrophic defeat at the Battle of Marj Dabiq in Syria in 922 AH / 1516 CE, and then a final crushing blow at the Battle of Ridaniyya near Cairo in 923 AH / 1517 CE. With these victories, the Mamluk Sultanate was fully absorbed into the Ottoman Empire. Egypt, Syria, and the blessed cities of Makkah, Madīnah, and Jerusalem were brought under Ottoman rule, officially ending Mamluk dominion after more than 260 years.

After defeating the Mamluks, Sultan Selim I entered Jerusalem and proclaimed, "Praise be to Allāh, who allowed me to become the guardian of the first Qiblah (al-Aqsa), the second masjid ever built, and the third holiest sanctuary in Islam." Sultan Selim I brought the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil III from Cairo to Istanbul, making the Ottomans the formal custodians of the Islamic Caliphate. His conquest marked Ottoman control over the Hejaz (including Makkah and Madīnah), Jerusalem, Syria, Egypt, and more. This marked the end of the Byzantine Empire and the beginning of Ottoman rule over one of the most important cities in the world. Despite this victory, he allowed the Orthodox Church to continue functioning and offered protection to its clergy and worshippers. For centuries after the conquest of the Mamluk lands, the Ottoman Empire represented the pinnacle of Islamic power, controlling vast territories across three continents.

The Persecution of Jews in Europe and Seeking Haven in Muslim Lands

On the other hand, in July 1290 CE, King Edward in England issued the Edict of Expulsion, which mandated the expulsion of all Jews from England. At the time, Jews in England were largely restricted to moneylending and financial professions, as they were barred from owning land or joining trade

The British Divide Palestine and the Birth of Israel

During World War I, the British government had made conflicting promises to both the Arabs and the Jews regarding the future of Jerusalem. These promises, including the Balfour Declaration of 1917 CE, pledged support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine to one group, while also assuring Arab independence in the region to the other group. Who gave Britain the right to even promise anything in the first place?

Let's see the key highlights:

- The McMahon-Hussein Correspondence (1915–1916 CE): Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, exchanged a series of letters with Sharif Hussein of Makkah. In these letters, the British promised support for Arab independence from Ottoman rule in exchange for Arab assistance against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. This implied the prospect of self-determination for the Arab people, including control over territories that would encompass Jerusalem.
- Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916 CE): In a secret agreement between Britain and France, known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the two powers divided the Middle East into spheres of influence, effectively carving up the Ottoman territories, including Jerusalem, into separate zones of control.
  - Zone A (French Influence): Syria, Lebanon.
  - Zone B (British Influence): Iraq, Jordan, parts of the Gulf.
  - Palestine: To be placed under international administration.

  This agreement was the first colonial betrayal of Arab expectations after the promise of independence made to Sharif Hussein in the McMahon Correspondence. This agreement further complicated the conflicting promises made to the Arabs and Jews. Imagine a room of drunk men drawing imaginary lines on the map and not caring how it would affect the lives of thousands, if not millions, in the slightest as long as they could fill their pockets.
- The Balfour Declaration (1917 CE): In a conflicting move, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, a public statement named after Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary at the time. The declaration expressed support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. This declaration was seen as a commitment to the Zionist movement and the establishment of a Jewish homeland in the same territory that was promised to

◆ 9 ◆

DEBUNKED: THE CLAIM OF BEING THE PROMISED PEOPLE

This is a claim we see being thrown around day and night to justify the oppression that is happening in Palestine today. Let's break down this claim and show how it is no longer valid.

From what can be traced historically, this land was inhabited by the Canaanites even before the birth of Bani Israel. Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) ﷺ migrated to this place from Iraq. It says in the Book of Genesis, "The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God." [Genesis 17:8]

In their own works, this is then challenged. It says in the Book of Deuteronomy, "You may say to yourselves, 'How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?' If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed." [18:21–22]

This is contrary to what the words of a Prophet are. Allāh says about his Prophet,

وَمَا يَنطِقُ عَنِ ٱلْهَوَىٰٓ ۝٣ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْىٌ يُوحَىٰ ۝٤

He does not speak out of (his own) desire. It is but a revelation revealed (to him). [Sūrat al-Najm, 53:3–4]

and,

وَعْدَ ٱللَّهِ حَقًّا ۚ وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ قِيلًا ۝١٢٢

Allāh's promise is (always) true. And whose word is more truthful than Allāh's? [Sūrat al-Nisā', 4:122]

How is it a promised land forever, when as per their sources, the Patriarch Abraham didn't even have land to be buried in? It says in the Book of Genesis, "His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, the field Abraham

◆ 11 ◆

WHAT CAN WE DO AS BELIEVERS?

Education and Awareness

We have read about the history of Bani Israel and Masjid al-Aqsa, and the many different rules that Jerusalem was under. We have also seen how the illegitimate state of Israel was established, and how Palestine and its people were subjected to widespread oppression. There are other matters that need to be tackled by leaders, governments, and at the state level. It is very clear to anyone with even an iota of consciousness in their hearts what is it that needs to be done for Palestine, and that is not our area of focus in this section. This section will try and focus on what we can do at an individual level to make a change.

The very first thing highlighted is education: knowing about the cause and spreading awareness about the cause. Occupation and genocides are not just acts of mass killing – they are attempts to erase a people, their identity, their history, and their right to exist. When we read, learn, and talk about Palestine, we actively resist this erasure.

The battle for Palestine is not just on the ground – it is also a media war. Learning and speaking out ensures that propaganda doesn't replace the truth. Independent reading dismantles biased narratives and helps truth survive.

Milan Kundera famously said, "The first step in liquidating a people is to erase its memory. Destroy its books, its culture, its history. Then have somebody write new books, manufacture a new culture, invent a new history. Before long, a nation will begin to forget what it is and what it was. The world around it will forget even faster."

The more people know, the more they act – through boycotts, petitions, protests, charity, political pressure, and education. Awareness is the seed of change.

The Status of the People

The Prophet ﷺ said, "No tiredness, exhaustion, worry, grief, distress or harm befalls a believer in this world, not even a thorn that pricks him, but Allāh expiates some of his sins thereby." [Al-Bukhārī]